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NOTE ON ὡς ἀπλῶ λόγῳ AESCHYLUS *PROMETHEUS* 46

In verse 610 there can be no question about the signification of ἀπλῶ λόγῳ. The words λέξω τορῶς in the preceding verse indicate clearly what the poet means. In the words of Isocrates (12. 246) the utterance of Prometheus is to be a λόγος ἀπλοῦς καὶ ῥάδιος μαθεῖν, or, as the orator says elsewhere (3. 52), the Titan proposes to tell the afflicted maid all that she desires to learn, ἀπλῶς καὶ φανερώς (= σαφῶς = τορῶς). There are to be no αἰολοστόμους χρησμούς ἀσήμους δυσκρίτως τ' εἰρημένους (661 f.), no dark sayings and interweavings of riddles (610). What he is about to narrate is to be an ἐναργῆς βάσις (663). In other words, he proposes to unfold his tale in simple speech (ἀπλοῦς = *simplex*); cf. Isocrates 4. 173 ἔστι δ' ἀπλοῦς καὶ ῥάδιος ὁ λόγος ὁ περὶ τούτων, 15. 9 οὐδὲ ῥάδιος ἦν οὐδ' ἀπλοῦς ἀλλὰ πολλὴν ἔχων πραγματείαν . . . καὶ πάσας (sc. ιδέας) ποιῆσαι σφίσιν αὐταῖς ὁμολογουμένας οὐ πᾶν μικρὸν ἦν ἔργον.

But in verse 46 we have a different story to tell. Neither substantive nor modifier has the same meaning as in 610—λόγος is not *oratio*, ἀπλοῦς is not *simplex*, in spite of Paley and Allen-Wecklein (who translate *plainly*), Blomfield (*ut vera dicam*), and Bevan (*to plain thinking*). ὡς ἀπλῶ λόγῳ means simply *speaking generally*, in contradistinction to καθ' ἕκαστον (going into details). Indeed, we could find no better commentary on this misinterpreted passage of the *Prometheus* than Isocrates *Panegyricus* 154: ὡς δ' ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν καὶ μὴ καθ' ἕνα ἕκαστον ἀλλ' ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ. So Aristotle *Rhet.* i. 5. 2 τί ἐστὶν ὡς ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν ἢ εὐδαιμονία; cf. Dinarchus 2. 19 ἀπλῶς δ' εἰπεῖν ἐναντία τοῖς νόμοις ἅπασιν πράττων διατετέλεκε, Isocrates 15. 117 δεῖ γὰρ οὐχ ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν ἀλλὰ σαφῶς φράσαι ('point out all the particulars'). In the last example φράσαι indicates that the subject requires explanations in detail in order to be expounded σαφῶς, which in this case is not equivalent to ἀπλῶς, although we saw that the same orator used the word synonymously with φανερώς in 3. 52. Cf. Plato *Hipp. Maj.* 296 d ἐκεῖνο μὲν τοῖνυν οἴχεται, τὸ δυνατόν τε καὶ χρῆσιμον ἀπλῶς εἶναι καλόν. In other words, Isocrates uses the adverb and verb here to express what Aeschylus expresses with the adjective and substantive in *Prometheus* 46—ἀπλῶ λόγῳ means *uno verbo*. The common prose phrase for this idea, ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ('as nearly as you can express it in a word') occurs once in Aeschylus (*Pers.* 714) and once in Euripides (*Hipp.* 1162). But ἀπλῶς is used in almost all classical writers to indicate that the statement is to be taken in the widest application. So in Plato, when Meno asks Socrates what he means by saying ἀρετή, ὦ Μένων, ἢ ἀρετή τις; the latter responds: οἶον, εἰ βούλει, στρογγυλόητος περὶ εἵποιμ' ἂν ἔγωγε ὅτι σχῆμά τί ἐστιν, οὐχ οὕτως ἀπλῶς ὅτι σχῆμα (73e). It is the general idea of ἀρετή Socrates wants, not some special manifestation of the quality.

I think it is quite clear that all Kratos means in the passage under discussion is: if one does not take the statement too accurately one may

say that Vulcan's "cursed craft" is not to blame at all for *πόνων τῶν νῦν παρόντων*. Socrates says to the slave in *Meno* 83e: *πειρῶ ἡμῖν εἰπεῖν ἀκριβῶς*. Now *ἀκριβῶς* is just the opposite of *ἀπλῶς*, and when one wishes a response neither excruciatingly exact nor obscurely general, one will say, with Isocrates (5. 46): *διεξέλθοιμεν μήτε παντάπασιν ἀπλῶς μήτε λίαν ἀκριβῶς*. Additions and explanations are needed, if one speaks too tersely, if one makes too sweeping an assertion, such as, for example, *οὐδὲν αἰτία τέχνη*. For this very reason Kratos qualifies his remark by *ὡς ἀπλῶ λόγῳ*. So Diotima questions Socrates (*Symposium* 206a) whether his statement has not been too general: *ἄρ' οὖν, ἣ δ' ἥ, οὕτως ἀπλοῦν ἐστὶ λέγειν . . . οὐ προσθετέον, ἔφη . . . καὶ τοῦτο προσθετέον*. And there is a difference between the declaration of Kratos taken with absolute literalness and taken as a merely general statement. Cf. Plato *Protag.* 331c *οὐ πάνν μοι δοκεῖ . . . οὕτως ἀπλοῦν εἶναι, ὥστε συγχωρῆσαι τήν τε δικαιοσύνην ὅσιον εἶναι καὶ τήν ὁσιότητα δίκαιον*.

J. E. HARRY

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI